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Bell, Boyd & Lloyd LLC
P.O. Box 1135
Chicago, IL 60690-1135

EXAMINER

HOEL, MATTHEW D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3713

DATE MAILED: 12/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/684,235

Applicant(s)

POOLE ET AL.

Examiner

Matthew D. Hoel

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 September 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 13 October 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments, see "Remarks," filed July 22nd, 2004, March 3rd, 2005, and Sept. 6th, 2005, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1 to 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Bennett and Gura have been fully considered and are persuasive. The earliest date for which Gura can be used for 102(e) purposes is Sept. 10th, 1999, its date of filing. The earliest date for which Bennett can be used for 102(e) purposes is June 8th, 2000, its international publication date. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. The applicants have demonstrated that they conceived the invention at least as early as June 29th, 1999 and were diligent in reducing it to practice by June 29th, 2000, the filing date of application 09/607,733. The examiner finds that the present application is supported by the specification of '733. The previous office action stated that there was a lack of embodiment in the affidavits as to a display device, a processor, a plurality of video reels, and a plurality of symbols on said video reels. Based on IGT's issued patents and pending applications with which the examiner is familiar, as well as applications 10/023,268 and 09/606,733, the examiner is satisfied that the applicants had in their possession on June 29th, 1999 (quoting in part from Claim 1): "a gaming device comprising: a display device, a processor operable to communicate with said display device; a plurality of video reels adapted to be displayed by said display device at a plurality of positions of the display device and controlled by said processor; a plurality of symbols on said video reels; a plurality of game outcomes..." This leaves

only the "exhibition" which had to be developed to create the present invention. It would have been a simple matter to program and debug the software on the development platform which the applicants demonstrated in their exhibits, and, when done with development, download it to a gaming system which the applicants clearly had in their possession on June 29th, 1999. The applicants have demonstrated both conception and diligence in reduction to practice. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Hagiwara ('244), Inoue ('524), Yoseloff ('096), Yoseloff ('009), and Thomas ('155). Please see the 103 rejections below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action (Non-Final Rejection, Mar. 22nd, 2004).
3. Claims 1 and 14 to 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara (U.S. reissued patent RE34,244) in view of Inoue (U.S. patent 5,609,524 A) and Yoseloff (U.S. patent 6,159,096 A).
4. As to Claim 1: Hagiwara in '244 discloses all of the elements of Claim 1, but lacks specificity as to a symbol-shaking exhibition at the display positions on the display device of at least two of the adjacent symbols on at least one video reel adjacent to at least one other video reel. Hagiwara in '244 teaches a gaming machine (Abstract) with a display device (CRT 12, Fig. 1). '244 has a processor operable to communicate with the display device (18, Fig. 1). '244 also has a plurality of video reels adapted to be displayed by the display device at a plurality of positions on the display device and

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controlled by the processor (Figs. 1 and 2). Each of the reels of '244 has a plurality of symbols on it (Fig. 2). '244 has a plurality of game outcomes (paytable, Fig. 3). Inoue, however, in '524 teaches an exhibition controlled by the processor and displayed by the displayed device at the positions of adjacent symbols on at least one of the reels adjacent to at least one other reel when one of said symbols or a combination of said symbols occurs on said reels, wherein the exhibition informs the player of the gaming device that the player has reached one of a plurality of game outcomes. '524 rotates (moves slightly back and forth, in a shaking manner) the symbols in a winning slot combination (Fig. 4; "triumphal rotation period" of alternating motor drive commands, Fig. 5; Col. 6, Lines 38 to 51). The rotation takes place at the display positions of adjacent symbols on at least one of the reels adjacent to at least another one of the video reels (possible paylines, Fig. 1; possible to have three symbols in a winning payline, Col. 4, Lines 60 to 64; at least one winning symbol in a payline, Claim 15; possible to have more than one winning symbol on a payline, Claim 16). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the triumphal rotation of winning symbols of '524 to '244. '524 is a slot machine that uses motors to drive mechanical reels (Abstract, Figs. 3 and 5). '244 can be implemented using either a CRT (Fig. 1) or mechanical reels (Figs. 5, 6, and 7). '524 has an array of nine individual reels (Fig. 1), like '244 (Figs. 5 and 7). The winning symbol rotation of '524 can be applied to any type of slot machine (Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40), which could include the CRT implementation of '244 (Fig. 1). '524 can have vertical or horizontal winning paylines, so it can have winning combinations of at least two symbols on the same reel or on adjacent reels.

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This combination would yield a gaming machine that shakes the winning symbols at the display positions on a display device of adjacent symbols on at least one video reel adjacent to at least one other video reel. The advantage of this combination would be to stimulate interest in the game by shaking the winning reels to make it easier for the player to identify when he or she has achieved a winning combination. Yoseloff, however, in '096 teaches possible winning combinations of one, two, or three symbols on a three-symbol payline (Tables III and IX, Claims 6 and 19). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the winning combinations of '096 to the combination of '244 and '524. '096 teaches templates for configuring winning symbol combinations for microprocessor-controlled slot machines (Abstract; Col. 4, Lines 21 to 35), like those of '244 (Fig. 1) and '524 (Fig. 3). The winning combinations of '524 can be changed (Col. 5, Lines 25 to 27) to winning symbol combinations containing at least two symbols and possibly more (plural symbols, at least two, Claim 16), like the winning combinations of '096 (Tables III and IX, Claims 6 and 19). This combination would yield a symbol-shaking exhibition at the display positions on the display device of at least two of the adjacent symbols on at least one video reel adjacent to at least one other video reel. The advantage of this combination would be to stimulate players' interest in the game by providing winning combinations of varying numbers of symbols.

5. As to Claims 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24: In '524, the exhibition includes the video reels moving to give the effect that the reels are shaking (triumphal rotation period, Fig. 5A; Col. 6, Lines 39 to 51).

6. As to Claim 15: Hagiwara in '244 teaches a gaming machine (Abstract) with a display device (CRT 12, Fig. 1). '244 has a processor operable to communicate with the display device (18, Fig. 1). '244 also has a plurality of video reels adapted to be displayed by the display device at a plurality of positions on the display device and controlled by the processor (Figs. 1 and 2). Each of the reels of '244 has a plurality of symbols on it (Fig. 2). '244 has a plurality of game outcomes (paytable, Fig. 3). '524 has an exhibition in which it rotates (moves slightly back and forth, in a shaking manner) the symbols in a winning slot combination (Fig. 4; "triumphal rotation period" of alternating motor drive commands, Fig. 5; Col. 6, Lines 38 to 51). The rotation takes place at the display positions of adjacent symbols on at least one of the reels adjacent to at least another one of the video reels (possible paylines, Fig. 1; possible to have three symbols in a winning payline, Col. 4, Lines 60 to 64; at least one winning symbol in a payline, Claim 15; possible to have more than one winning symbol on a payline, Claim 16). This exhibition informs the player that he or she has reached one of a plurality of game outcomes. The combination of '244, '524, and '096 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the positions of at least two adjacent symbols in a row on adjacent video reels, wherein at least one of said symbols is adjacent to at least one other video reel, when one of said symbols or a combination of said symbols occurs on said video reels. '096 can have winning combinations of two symbols (Tables III and IX). '524 can have up to five reels (Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40).

7. As to Claim 17: Hagiwara in '244 teaches a gaming machine (Abstract) with a display device (CRT 12, Fig. 1). '244 has a processor operable to communicate with

the display device (18, Fig. 1). '244 also has a plurality of video reels adapted to be displayed by the display device at a plurality of positions on the display device and controlled by the processor (Figs. 1 and 2). Each of the reels of '244 has a plurality of symbols on it (Fig. 2). '244 has a plurality of game outcomes (paytable, Fig. 3). '524 has an exhibition in which it rotates (moves slightly back and forth, in a shaking manner) the symbols in a winning slot combination (Fig. 4; "triumphal rotation period" of alternating motor drive commands, Fig. 5; Col. 6, Lines 38 to 51). The rotation takes place at the display positions of adjacent symbols on at least one of the reels adjacent to at least another one of the video reels (possible paylines, Fig. 1; possible to have three symbols in a winning payline, Col. 4, Lines 60 to 64; at least one winning symbol in a payline, Claim 15; possible to have more than one winning symbol on a payline, Claim 16). This exhibition informs the player that he or she has reached one of a plurality of game outcomes. The combination of '244, '524, and '096 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the positions of at least three adjacent symbols in a row on adjacent video reels which are disposed between and adjacent to at least two other of said video reels when one of said symbols or a combination of said symbols occurs on said video reels. '096 can have winning combinations of three symbols (Tables III and IX). '524 can have up to five reels (Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40).

8. As to Claim 19: Hagiwara in '244 teaches a gaming machine (Abstract) with a display device (CRT 12, Fig. 1). '244 has a processor operable to communicate with the display device (18, Fig. 1). '244 also has a plurality of video reels adapted to be displayed by the display device at a plurality of positions on the display device and

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controlled by the processor (Figs. 1 and 2). Each of the reels of '244 has a plurality of symbols on it (Fig. 2). '244 has a plurality of game outcomes (paytable, Fig. 3). '524 has an exhibition in which it rotates (moves slightly back and forth, in a shaking manner) the symbols in a winning slot combination (Fig. 4; "triumphal rotation period" of alternating motor drive commands, Fig. 5; Col. 6, Lines 38 to 51). The rotation takes place at the display positions of adjacent symbols on at least one of the reels adjacent to at least another one of the video reels (possible paylines, Fig. 1; possible to have three symbols in a winning payline, Col. 4, Lines 60 to 64; at least one winning symbol in a payline, Claim 15; possible to have more than one winning symbol on a payline, Claim 16). This exhibition informs the player that he or she has reached one of a plurality of game outcomes. The combination of '244, '524, and '096 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the positions of at least two of the adjacent symbols on at least one of the video reels adjacent to at least one other of said video reels when one of said symbols or a combination of said symbols occurs on said video reels. The exhibition includes an animation having at least one moving image at least partially displayed at the positions of the adjacent symbols. The shaking reels of '524 comprise an animation of a moving image when implemented on the CRT of '244 ('244, 10, Fig. 1; '524, Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40). '524 can have vertical or horizontal winning paylines, so it can have winning combinations of at least two symbols on the same reel or on adjacent reels. '096 can have winning combinations of two symbols (Tables III and IX). '524 can have up to five reels (Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40).

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9. As to Claim 21: Hagiwara in '244 teaches a gaming machine (Abstract) with a display device (CRT 12, Fig. 1). '244 has a processor operable to communicate with the display device (18, Fig. 1). '244 also has a plurality of video reels adapted to be displayed by the display device at a plurality of positions on the display device and controlled by the processor (Figs. 1 and 2). Each of the reels of '244 has a plurality of symbols on it (Fig. 2). '244 has a plurality of game outcomes (paytable, Fig. 3). '524 has an exhibition in which it rotates (moves slightly back and forth, in a shaking manner) the symbols in a winning slot combination (Fig. 4; "triumphal rotation period" of alternating motor drive commands, Fig. 5; Col. 6, Lines 38 to 51). The rotation takes place at the display positions of adjacent symbols on at least one of the reels adjacent to at least another one of the video reels (possible paylines, Fig. 1; possible to have three symbols in a winning payline, Col. 4, Lines 60 to 64; at least one winning symbol in a payline, Claim 15; possible to have more than one winning symbol on a payline, Claim 16). This exhibition informs the player that he or she has reached one of a plurality of game outcomes. The combination of '244, '524, and '096 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the positions of at least two adjacent symbols in a row on adjacent reels, at least one of said symbols being adjacent to at least one other of said video reels, when one or said symbols or a combination of said symbols occurs on said video reels. The exhibition includes an animation having at least one moving image at least partially displayed at the positions of the adjacent symbols. The shaking reels of '524 comprise an animation of a moving image when implemented on the CRT of '244 ('244, 10, Fig. 1; '524, Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40). '096 can have winning

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combinations of two symbols (Tables III and IX). '524 can have up to five reels (Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40).

10. As to Claim 23: Hagiwara in '244 teaches a gaming machine (Abstract) with a display device (CRT 12, Fig. 1). '244 has a processor operable to communicate with the display device (18, Fig. 1). '244 also has a plurality of video reels adapted to be displayed by the display device at a plurality of positions on the display device and controlled by the processor (Figs. 1 and 2). Each of the reels of '244 has a plurality of symbols on it (Fig. 2). '244 has a plurality of game outcomes (paytable, Fig. 3). '524 has an exhibition in which it rotates (moves slightly back and forth, in a shaking manner) the symbols in a winning slot combination (Fig. 4; "triumphal rotation period" of alternating motor drive commands, Fig. 5; Col. 6, Lines 38 to 51). The rotation takes place at the display positions of adjacent symbols on at least one of the reels adjacent to at least another one of the video reels (possible paylines, Fig. 1; possible to have three symbols in a winning payline, Col. 4, Lines 60 to 64; at least one winning symbol in a payline, Claim 15; possible to have more than one winning symbol on a payline, Claim 16). This exhibition informs the player that he or she has reached one of a plurality of game outcomes. The combination of '244, '524, and '096 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the positions of at least three adjacent symbols in a row on adjacent video reels which are disposed between and adjacent to at least two other of said video reels when one of said symbols or a combination of said symbols occurs on said video reels. The exhibition includes an animation having at least one moving image at least partially displayed at the positions of the adjacent symbols. The shaking

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reels of '524 comprise an animation of a moving image when implemented on the CRT of '244 ('244, 10, Fig. 1; '524, Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40). '096 can have winning combinations of three symbols (Tables III and IX). '524 can have up to five reels (Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40).

11. Claims 2, 3, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara ('244), Inoue ('524), and Yoseloff ('096) in view of Yoseloff (U.S. patent 6,117,009 A).

12. As to Claim 2: The combination of Hagiwara ('244), Inoue ('524), and Yoseloff ('096) discloses all of the elements of Claim 2, but lack specificity as to the outcome reached by the player being an opportunity to play a bonus game. Yoseloff, however, in '009 teaches an outcome being an opportunity to play a bonus game (balloon-popping bonus game, Fig. 3; Col. 3, Line 44 to Col. 5, Line 45). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the bonus game of '009 to the combination of '244, '524, and '096. '009 is a method of configuring winning symbols combinations for a video gaming device (Abstract), like the video gaming device of '244 (Fig. 1). '009 is a method of configuring winning combinations for a gaming device comprising selecting a set of game symbols, assigning a probability of occurrence to each symbol, selecting a plurality of outcome templates, each template comprising X symbols, assigning a probability of occurrence to each template, and assigning each template a subset of symbols from the set of game symbols (Abstract), like the method of '096. The

advantage of this combination would be to make the game more appealing to players by providing a bonus game offering them a chance to increase their winnings.

13. As to Claim 3: The bonus outcome of '009 is an award of bonus credits in the form of a multiplier (Col. 4, Lines 21 to 27).

14. As to Claim 13: '009 has a textual message informing the player of a game outcome, in this case the multiplier won in a bonus game (36, Fig. 3).

15. Claims 4 to 12 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara ('244), Inoue ('524), Yoseloff ('096), and Yoseloff ('009) in view of Thomas, et al. (UK patent application publication GB 2 117 155 A, application 8205571).

16. As to Claim 4: The combination of Hagiwara ('244), Inoue ('524), Yoseloff ('096), and Yoseloff ('009) discloses all of the elements of Claim 4, but lacks specificity as to a game outcome including at least one spin of one of the video reels not at the position of the exhibition. Thomas, however, in '155 teaches allowing a player to spin a reel not at the position of a combination of symbols (nudge feature). '155 teaches a slot machine (Fig. 1). '155 has a "nudge" feature that indicates to the player a symbol on a reel that could be changes to obtain a winning combination (Page 1, Lines 17 to 35). That reel is spun or nudged by a certain amount in an attempt to gain a winning combination (Page 3, Lines 124 to 127) while the other reels are held. If a nudge is available for a particular reel, the selection button 16 is illuminated for that reel, and the number of available nudges are displayed (Page 4, Lines 110 to 119). A particular reel or more than one reel can be nudged until the number of allowable nudges is used up (Page 4,

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Lines 5 to 10). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the nudge feature of '155 to the combination of '244, '524, '096, and '009. The result of the combination would allow a player to spin one of the reels not at the position of the exhibition. For example, the player could spin a third reel in an attempt to convert one of the two-symbol winning combinations of '096 (Tables III and IX) into a winning three-symbol combination. '155 is a slot machine with a CRT monitor (Page 3, Lines 8 to 11) and simulated reels (Page 1, Lines 61 to 66), like the game of '244. The advantage of this combination would be to enhance players' interest game by allowing them an opportunity to change the payline in an attempt to obtain a higher payout. Profitability for the house would be maintained by the risk of the player obtaining a lower-paying combination.

17. As to Claim 5: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have an outcome allowing at least one spin of a plurality of video reels not at the position of the exhibition. For example, if the game had five video reels ('524, Col. 7, Lines 35 to 41) and a combination of three winning symbols ('096, Tables III and IX), the game could have two nudges ('155) to allow the player to spin the two reels without winning symbols in an attempt to obtain a winning combination of five symbols ('096 able to have variable number of X reels, Abstract).

18. As to Claim 6: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have a game outcome of a plurality of spins of at least one of the video reels not at the position of the exhibition ('155, same reel able to be spun more than one until number of symbols is exhausted; Page 1, Lines 27 to 35).

19. As to Claim 7: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have a game outcome of a plurality of spins of a plurality of the video reels not at the position of the exhibition.

20. As to Claim 8: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have a game outcome of at least one spin of at least one of the video reels at the position of the exhibition. For example, the for example, the player could be given a nudge to change the winning combination of "DS DS 7" of '096, Table IX, to the higher-paying combination of "DS DS DS."

21. As to Claim 9: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have a game outcome of at least one spin of one of the video reels at the position of the exhibition and at least one spin of the video reels not at the position of the exhibition.

22. As to Claim 10: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the position of at least one of the video reels between two of the other video reels. '524 can have a winning combination of a single special symbol (Col. 7, Lines 23 to 34), which could be in the center reel (Fig. 1).

23. As to Claim 11: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the position of a plurality of video reels between two other video reels.

24. As to Claim 12: The combination of '244, '524, '096, '009, and '155 would inherently be able to have an exhibition at the position of at least two video reels on a

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screen of five video reels ('009, X reels, Abstract; '096, winning combination of two symbols, Table III; '524, five reels, Col. 7, Lines 35 to 40).

Citation of Pertinent Prior Art

25. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Rock in U.S. patent 4,357,567 A teaches a reversible slot machine motor. Takemoto, et al. in U.S. patent 5,655,965 A teach flowing slot reel symbols. Takeuchi, et al. in U.S. patent 6,086,066 A teach shaking slot reel symbols. Lawrence, et al. in U.S. patent 5,967,893 A teach tabulating possible hold strategies for slot machines. Parker, et al. in UK patent publications GB 2 062 922 A and GB 2 067 807 A teach a nudge feature for a slot machine. Reynolds in UK patent publication GB 2 112 984 A teaches a nudge feature for a slot machine. Wain in UK patent publications GB 2 092 797 A and GB 2 165 385 A teaches a nudge feature for a slot machine. Carmean in U.S. patent 4,517,654 A teaches generating video slot reel characters. Hagiwara in U.S. patent 5,580,055 A teaches using stereoscopic luminescent symbols to achieve animation effects on slot reels. Thomas, et al. in U.S. patent 5,449,173 A teach shaking slot machine reels. Dickenson, et al. in U.S. patent 5,251,898 A teach randomly moving slot reels in different directions. Hooker in U.S. patent 4,241,920 A teaches an extra spin for a slot machine. Hooker in U.S. patent 4,200,291 A teaches a hold-and-advance feature for a slot machine.

Conclusion

26. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew D. Hoel whose telephone number is (571) 272-5961. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. to Fri., 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

27. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan M. Thai can be reached on (571) 272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

28. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Matthew D. Hoel, Patent Examiner
AU 3713



XUAN M. THAI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

TC 3700